

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AS A STIMULUS FOR HUMAN AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this paper is aimed at reviewing the strategic positions of vocational education in the economic development of Nigeria vis-à-vis the challenges encountered in its development and measures to be adopted in promoting it. The paper notes the positive relationship between vocational education and economic development in general. In order to address the issues raised in this paper as clearly as possible the paper is classified into five sections which include the introduction, review of related literature, methodology, analysis of findings, summary, conclusions and recommendations. The pattern of methodology adopted by the paper is content analysis. The paper concludes that vocational education is significantly important in human and economic development and therefore recommends that the sub-sector be strengthened and harnessed in tandem with global best practices through investment in research and development as well as diversified means of adequate funding. The curriculum of studies should be updated to conform between the demand and supply needs of both the public and private sector of the economy with a view to translating the skills acquired as well as creation of a stock of relevant human resource for overall development.

Keywords: Vocational Education, Stimulus, Human, Economic, Development, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Imam (2012) traced the history of educational development in Nigeria and posits that before the coming of the colonial masters different approaches to attainment of education had existed in the two major regions that come to be known as Nigeria. She cited the works of Taiwo (1980) and Ocho (1981) and concluded that where as in the Northern part of Nigeria it was majorly Islamic ways of living and education derived from the teachings of Qur'an and Sunnah, in the southern part of the country it was culture and tradition that shapes their system of education. Fafunwa (2004) in his submission added that all the two approaches were aimed at a single objective that was targeted at developing the child's physical skills, character, intellectual faculties and sense of belonging to the society. He explained that through this process, the child develops sound manners on social relations, acquire a specific skill and expand his knowledge about his personal background. Fafunwa, in furtherance to this espoused that education plays vital roles in the development process of a nation and that justifies the reasons why countries of the world invest in research and development with a view to determining the best practices to suit their peculiar needs.



However, on the broader scale the role of TVET in both the economic development of the individual and the nation at large is not to be underestimated. For example, Urama and Ndidi (2012) have highlighted the importance of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and suggested that this system of education not only provides its recipients with skills but help a nation to produce the needed manpower for its economic development.

Amedu (2013) writes that TVET is a complete curriculum of studies and learning experiences which has its beginning with the career identification and options, the support requirements, academic and lifelong skills that leads to the achievement of high academic standard, leadership preparation for industry and continuing education, Oguntoyi (2013) restated the role of vocational education by arguing that the development of any nation rests upon the social and economic contributions of its citizens. He opines that vocational and technical education and training not only plays strategic roles in promoting human and economic development but makes it possible for the acquisition of applied skills and basic scientific knowledge.

TVET is gradually becoming a global affair. Many countries of the world like Germany, Japan, Korea and others have long recognized the role of TVET in their quest for national development. However, Nigeria unlike these listed countries is yet to fully feel the impact of TVET or adequately capture its essence. This paper seeks to examine the roles of TVET with a view to determine the challenges encountered in its development in Nigeria and suggest possible measures to promote the subsector. The paper has five sections with section one as its introduction, section two; literature review, section three: methodology, section four: analysis of findings and section five: summary, conclusions and recommendations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviews related literature on TVET bordering on its definitions, the meaning of sustainable human and economic development, the role of TVET and the challenges faced by the sub-sector. Authors whose works were reviewed are all in agreement with regards to the positive relationship between acquisition of TVET skills and increase in productivity paving way for economic development.

Definitions of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

TVET is defined as those aspects of the educational development process involving the whole range of skills in addition to general education. It consists of the study of technology and related sciences and the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to various occupations and sectors of the economy (NPE, 2004).

Eze (2010) is of the view that TVET is a policy drive targeted at the whole range of skills, attitudes and habits which will make its recipients a creative and resourceful individual. However for Urama and Ndidi (2012) TVET is, but the summation of Technical education, Vocational Education, on the job training and apprenticeship delivered in a formal or non-formal way. Lawal (2013) in accepting this view added that TVET is that system of education which

develops unique skills in the hearts of its recipients which could be applied in relevant practical applications with a view to making and bringing positive changes in the community in addition to living a self-dependent life. He concluded that TVET was developed to limit the over dependence of school graduates on government owned jobs. TVET gives individuals the skills to live, learn and work as productive global citizens.

The Meaning of Sustainable Human and Economic Development:

In providing the meaning of sustainable human and economic development the UNDP (2010) states that:

“Human development is the expansion of people’s freedoms to live long, healthy and creative, to advance other goals they have reason to value, and to engage actively in shaping development equitably and sustainably in a shared planet. The society is seen as the beneficiary and driver of human development either individually or through collective effort. Human development is a term tailored towards the realization of three basic components, i.e., the well-being of person to expand his real freedom, the empowerment that would enable people and groups to act to drive valuable outcomes overtime and finally justice, expanding equity, sustaining outcomes overtime and respecting human rights and other societal goals”.

Although, Urama and Ndidi (2012) conceptualize development as a process by which some systems, place or object of person enhances its states of being opining that development must be measurable in terms of physical growth, socio-economic improvement and general enhancement in the quality of life, Alam (2008) sees human development as a concept more than the raising of incomes of a society arguing however that for human development to be fully achieved, government must be seen to provide a creative environment on which a society can adequately prosper in their chosen occupation. If this is done incidence of interdependency in the society would be promoted leading to self-sufficiency and expansion of development variables in tandem with the yearnings and aspirations of the society. In the views of Amedu (2013) economic development can be referred to the attainment of modern ideas that have bearings with constant increase in productivity, socio-economic justice, functional institutions and values. She observed that the main objectives of economic development is to raise the standard of living and welfare of a society in the environment of prosperity. Sustainable economic development occurs where most of indicators and economic aggregates show positive sign. It involves general change in the levels of socio-economic needs of the society. It entails the general shift from traditional occupations to a more modern methods of social goods delivery system.

The Role of Technical and Vocational Education and Training

The National Policy on Education (2004) have conceptualized vocational and technical education as an important ingredient for technological and industrial development in Nigeria. TVET plays the role of catalyst for the industrialization process of other countries through the development of manpower training and the fabrication of simple adoptable technology to service the needs of local industries. Hallak (1990) extrapolates the linkage between Vocational and Technological Education and Human Resources Development and maintained that the sector is crucial for development. Akpomie (2009) propounds that no nation can move forward technologically, industrially and economically without some structural changes and creation of strong connections on issues relating to wealth creation, poverty reduction and active participation in productive occupations. He noted that human resource, technical proficiency, professional qualifications are necessary ingredients required to confront the needs of future generations. He therefore, concluded that Vocational and Technical Education is the vital tool for the sustainable advancement of any nation. He listed the roles of TVET as follows:

- i. Serve as a learning and training center for the translation of yearnings and aspirations of the recipients of its knowledge.
- ii. Builds technical and conceptual skills in the individual that prepares him to achieve life-long career opportunities
- iii. Leads to technological advancement
- iv. Reduces poverty and idleness
- v. Directs towards self-reliance and sustainable means of livelihood.

Other views with regards to TVET includes that by Adenle and Olukayode (2007). They posit that Vocational and Technical Education encompasses many programs with different branches which when fully harnessed can move the nation from the net-importer status to one of a producer. They observed that given the various programs encapsulated in the TVET curriculum an unlimited scope of career opportunities awaits the recipients of the various trainings and skills that would in no doubt expand the potentials with lifelong occupations.

The challenges faced by TVET in Nigeria

TVET like the general education sector have lots of challenges bedeviling its success in Nigeria. An in-depth analysis reveals incidence of a double edge constraint. On the one hand there exist the notion on the part of the society that the sector is for the less privileged members who could not for a given reason attain a university education. Given this situation parents would therefore rather not send their wards to basic schools where vocational education is taught instead on the mindset of most parents is the desire to produce an engineer in place of technician. This seem to be the general view in most countries. Alam (2008) studying the Bangladesh society noticed that parents thought of their wards being laborer's therefore they would rather go for a more formal institution. In their opinion the quality of TVET is poor and could therefore not provide the sufficient skills they require for their children. Amedu (2013) seem to share this view when in relating the Bangladeshi experience in Nigeria contended that not until recently Vocational and

Technical Education in Nigeria was not seen as a tool for development but rather as a second best option for school drop outs and individuals.

To complicate matters government policy on TVET has mostly been seen as the main issue militating the attainment of its objectives (Oguntuyi, 2013). In the same vein Ekpenyong (2008) sees the absence of cohesion between the training providers and the market demand for its output as one issue mitigating against the success of TVET. He observed that the opinions and contributions of stakeholders are not usually considered in the enrolment of trainees. He emphasized on the need for an input from industry experts, employers of labor, professional associations and practitioners. The curriculum should capture both the market need and the needs of the recipients of the training thereby making the training relevant and useful to the society. Bennell (1996) stressing the views of Ekpenyong added that TVET has been a powerful tool in development planning but cautioned that its indiscriminate execution could have negative impact on development. Habibu (2007) has outlined some of the problems as follows:

- i. Misconception of the definition and meaning of the program
- ii. Wrong societal perception of TVET program
- iii. Weak government policy and poor implementation
- iv. Inadequate funding of the program
- v. Lack of basic facilities and workshops
- vi. Inadequate qualified personnel, leaders and administrators
- vii. Lack of power supply in existing workshops which limit the conduct of practical
- viii. Problems related to the curriculum of the program
- ix. Influence of politics on TVET program.

Imam (2012) sees the problem as a resultant consequence or a by-product of poor implementation of government policies and funding crisis. These poor policies have impacted negatively on the quality of education. She noted that, while the literacy level in Nigeria stands at 57 percent the bulk of 49 percent teachers in Nigeria are not in any way qualified to teach.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology for this paper was done via the use of secondary data which means that Text books, Periodical reports, Academic journals and Conference papers were some of the materials majorly referred to for the extraction of information needed to beef up the texture of this paper. However for the interpretation of data collected the content analysis method was employed.

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

So far as observed observantly the outcome of this research work leaves no one in doubt as to the place of TVET in promoting Nigeria's quest for human and economic development. Discovered are the following facts:

- i. Not only does TVET provide the acquisition of life long skills for its recipients but has the tendency to help Nigeria its spate of unemployment

- ii. TVET also helps in reducing the preponderance of capital flight. A nation like Nigeria with a fully developed TVET has the capacity to increase its foreign reserve
- iii. A fully structured TVET can help in the enhancement of the spirit of independence in Nigerian citizens
- iv. Additionally apart from promoting division of labor it is also capable of stimulating the culture of interdependence and exchange amongst individuals
- v. A well-developed TVET has the capacity to reduce the incidence of poverty amongst Nigerian citizens as every trained person will become productive and rely less on government for sustenance
- vi. TVET has the tendency to also facilitate the spirit of research and development and the promotion of the individuals initiatives and brewing of new innovations
- vii. If TVET is fully harnessed in Nigeria it has the capacity to propel it into a developed nation and finally,
- viii. A well-grounded TVET, no doubt leads to human and economic development of a nation, Nigeria inclusive.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The thrust of this paper have so far delved on the role of TVET is stimulating human and economic development in Nigeria. To do justice to the paper, a review of some definitions of TVET was made including the meaning of the concept sustainable Human development. The paper notwithstanding also listed some of the roles of TVET in Nigeria including challenges being faced in enshrining it. Overall the paper in its final summation listed its findings as viewed by the researcher.

Conclusion

It is the conclusion of this paper that although TVET occupies an important position in the quest for the development of nations, Nigeria is still grappling with the idea of enshrining TVET and therefore is yet to reap from its benefits. Unarguably the bane and limitations of TVET in Nigeria is poor misconception of the program by the society in addition to the lack of the institution of vibrant policies for the program by the government.

Recommendations

In view of the findings of this paper, it is recommended that the curriculum currently being used in Nigeria should be updated in tune with the current happenings in the world as well as patterned to suit the peculiarities of Nigeria's local environment. Additionally the paper recommends the need for synergy between the labor market and training providers. Also that funding for the sector should be made transparent and adequate. Next to this is the need for the justice system to be reviewed to deal with economic saboteurs and corrupt personnel. On a final



note the paper is of the view that government should re-look and update its service structure by removing restrictions to the levels that can be attained with TVET qualifications.

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